



Date: October 28, 2005

HIGHLIGHTS FROM MOROCCO

USAID ADMINISTRATOR MEETS the HEAD of MOROCCO's AUDIT COURT - USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios met Dr. Ahmed El-Midaoui, head of the Moroccan Audit Court and chair of the building capacity committee for the **International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI)** and David Walker, Comptroller General of the United States. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss potential partnerships between USAID and INTOSAI, and explore issues of mutual interest including accountability, governance, transparency, and anti-corruption. Follow-up from the meeting will include further exploration into the use of the **Global Development Alliance** – public-private sector alliances for leveraging funds for INTOSAI. Dr. El-Midaoui expressed his pleasure with USAID's assistance to the Moroccan Audit Court, which includes: 1) technical assistance to build capacity of the Audit Court to conduct audits; 2) practical, hands-on training and projects for staff; and 3) financial support for key Audit court activities.

STREAMLINING INVESTMENT PROCEDURES - The USAID/Morocco "Investment Promotion Program" provides support to the Regional Investment Centers (RIC) facilitating investment in each of the country's 16 regions. A draft **Investment Procedures** manual was jointly developed by USAID contractors and four pilot RIC centers (Tangiers, Agadir, Rabat and Béni Mellal) to improve the quality of services provided to investors, standardize procedures, and facilitate collaboration and transparency between all governmental offices involved in investment formalities. On September 28, a **National Committee on Investment Formalities** was jointly established with the Ministry of General Affairs of the Government of Morocco, to validate the manual and promote simplified investment formalities. The expected impact includes **more efficient public services, improvement in governance and transparency**, and an ICT-based integrated information system on investment (e-government project).

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM for AGRICULTURE LAUNCHED - Nearly half of all Moroccans is dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods, thus remaining at the mercy of precarious rainy seasons. As a result of drought years and the lack of employment opportunities in rural areas, **uncontrolled, mushrooming urbanization** affects Morocco's main cities. In spite of the urgent need to keep youth "on the land," there is very little donor collaboration to assist Morocco in improving employment opportunities for young people in the country's vast rural regions. USAID/Morocco's integrated strategies for agriculture, agribusiness and agriculture vocational training are therefore welcome priorities for the Moroccan Ministry of Agriculture. USAID /Morocco and the Ministry of Agriculture recently brought together the directors of the agriculture vocational education institutes in selected provinces, and representatives from the Ministry's department for training and the Secretariat for Vocational Training to validate the strategic objective framework for **improving the link between education, training and the rural work force**. USAID/Morocco will work on improving the relevance and quality of agricultural vocational training and facilitate and support graduates' placement into the workforce. The ultimate goal of the program is to assist Morocco's rural populations to make the necessary adjustments that will be required by the **Free Trade Agreement**.



Eye on Morocco

Perception of Corruption "Stabilized" in Morocco

The Corruption Perception Index (CPI), a composite measure of corruption calculated annually by Transparency International (TI), is based on surveys conducted among the business community and market analysts. According to this year's study, Morocco scored 3.5 points on a 10 (best) to 1 (worst) scale. Morocco was ranked 78th out of 159 countries in 2005, slightly behind last year (77th). Historically, Morocco's

position improved from 45th in 1999, to 37th in 2000, but the trend reversed in 2002 (52nd), and plunged in 2003 (70th).

With a score of 9.7 out of ten Iceland topped the 2005 CPI list. Chad and Bangladesh came last with 1.7 points. Among the group of Arab countries, Oman obtained the best score (6.3 points), Morocco was 11th and Iraq (2.2 points) was last, 137th on the 159 surveyed countries.

A representative of Transparency-Maroc, the Moroccan TI's branch established in 1996, said that the government of Morocco "should urgently understand the seriousness of the current situation and its disastrous consequences on Morocco's accessibility and quality of public services, economy, employment, as well as the country's image and economic attractiveness."

Government's Action Plan to Prevent Avian Flu

The Avian Bird Flu Action Plan was adopted on October 18, 2005 by the government of Morocco. Morocco has banned the importation of live birds and bird-related products from the countries affected by the disease. The Ministry of Agriculture established stricter quarantine measures to be imposed on poultry farms, border posts and slaughter houses in case of outbreak. The Minister of Health Mohammed Cheikh Biadillah has asserted that Moroccan poultry is healthy and the country remains untouched by the pandemic. The Moroccan government is collaborating with experts from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the EU countries. USAID/Morocco's Mission Disaster Officer and Agriculture Officer met this week with counterparts from the Ministry of Agriculture (livestock department) who assured the Mission that all necessary measures were taken throughout the value chain to ensure efficient surveillance and control of the risks. Mission will be following up and will be meeting with Ministry of Health officials and other donors like FAO.

The newly-adopted action plan abides by a WHO recommendation, which recommends that governments keep enough anti-viral drugs and regular human flu vaccines to inoculate at least 25 percent of their populations. Besides, the government has decided to activate the National Commission for the Monitoring of Avian Flu, set up in 2004 to keep an eye on the development of an epidemic in the world, report on the situation in infected countries, and guarantee the safety of the country.



Administrative Announcements:

- Working hours during *Ramadan* (Oct 5 – Nov 3): 8:00 – 3:00 (4:00 – 11:00 WDC time)
- Mission portfolio review (Nov 21-25)
- Implementers meeting (Nov 22)



Events for October-November 2005:

- Democracy/governance "iftar" with women NGOs
- Business environment program launch
- Economic growth round-table with partners
- Launch of the new rural tourism and the investment portal web sites
- CSSF and Cisco Academy graduation ceremonies
- Ambassador's visit to USAID projects in Errachidia region